

Troop 55 SUMMER CAMPMASTER HANDBOOK

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Downloadable copies available at www.troop55.org

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Introduction

This *Summer Campmaster Handbook* is principally aimed at assisting the adult assigned to serve as the Campmaster for an individual summer camp in which Troop 55 is participating. It is also useful for all adults and Scouts in leadership roles for summer camps, but it is not a comprehensive guide for all their jobs. The *Troop 55 Handbook* and the *Troop 55 Campmaster Handbook* (which is principally directed at weekend campouts), available at www.troop55.org, also provides essential information for the summer camp Campmaster.

The method of Scouting is the ***Patrol Method***. Every summer camp must vigorously implement the Patrol Method. Otherwise, it is not really a Scout experience. If you need a refresher on the Patrol Method, look at your Scout's Scout Book and the *Troop 55 Handbook*.

Summer camp experiences, from merit badge camps to advanced high adventure programs, provide Scouts with terrific opportunities to execute the ***Patrol Method***, learn to lead and follow their peers, organize themselves and their fellow Scouts, advance in rank, and reach the pinnacles of Scouting. They bring together all of the skills that Scouts work on throughout the rest of the year, and get the value of daily repetitions over a program that may last from one to three weeks during the summer. They get to be in charge of decisions that have consequences for themselves and their fellow Scouts. In short, they are what Scouting is all about. This handbook is designed primarily so that these ends of Scouting may be achieved.

Some important terminology

"Summer camp programs" is the generic term for resident camps and treks lasting a week or longer. "Summer" is sometimes a misnomer, because weeklong camps are offered in a number of locations during school breaks during the school year. All summer camp programs fall into one or more of the following subcategories:

"Council-sponsored camps" are sponsored by local Boy Scout Councils, like our own Sam Houston Area Council.

"Merit Badge Camp" is a weeklong camp offering a large number of merit badges where Scouts live in tents and is almost always a council-sponsored camp open to all Boy Scouts of any rank and age. A merit badge fair or other non-resident program is **not** a merit badge camp.

"Mid-Adventure Program" at Troop 55 means a program suited to Scouts who have previously attended at least one Merit Badge Camp, and are at least 12 years old. "Mid-Adventure Programs" is a term that Troop 55 uses that is not universally used in Scouting, and when used may mean different things to different Troops and councils. At Troop 55, these programs offer an introduction to high adventure that requires

greater skills and personal management than a Merit Badge Camp typically requires. The Troop may require particular advancement, summer camp experience, or training as prerequisites to participation in a Mid-Adventure Program.

"High Adventure Program" are programs that involve advanced outdoor skills and/or foreign travel. The age requirements are *at least* 13 years old, and may include higher age, experience, advancement, and training requirements.

"Roll your own program" is a program, typically Mid-Adventure or High Adventure, that Troop 55 organizes independently of any Boy Scout council program.

To prepare for a summer camp program, you must know which of the above-listed terms applies to that summer camp program. There is enormous variety in such programs, including for example:

1. Merit Badge Camps less than a day's drive from Houston
2. Merit Badge Camps requiring a plane trip or multi-day bus travel
3. Camps with over 100 Scouts and adults
4. High Adventure treks with a total crew of 10 or less
5. Camps following a detailed program offered by a Scout council
6. Programs devised almost entirely by Troop 55 Scouts and adults

It follows that there is great variety in the requirements to prepare for the camp.

Organization of this Manual

This manual is mostly directed at the tasks required once a summer camp has already been selected. This document is organized in three sections:

1. A general description of the types of summer camps
2. A description of the leadership roles for Scouts and adults at summer camp.
3. a set of checklists for new and returning Campmasters to help them organize the summer camp and a reference providing background, guidance and troop policy.

Types of Summer Camps and Participation

The *Troop 55 Handbook*, available on-line at www.troop55.org, has specific policies regarding organizing and participating in summer camps, and for the selection of Scouts and adults to participate in them. Everyone involved in a summer camp should familiarize themselves with these policies.

Summer programs usually fall into one of the following categories:

1. **Traditional Merit Badge Camp.** All Scouts are eligible to participate.
 - a. Merit Badge Camps sponsored by our own Sam Houston Area Council

- b. Merit Badge Camps sponsored by other councils throughout the United States

2. Mid-Adventure Programs.

- a. Mid-Adventure Programs that operate as an “older Scout” program co-located to some degree with a council-sponsored Merit Badge Camp. These range from programs that simply provide additional daily activities for Scouts in lieu of merit badge classes for a portion of the day, to backpacking that is less demanding than a full High Adventure trek. Eligibility is set by the camp, but typically requires previous Merit Badge Camp experience and age 12+.
- b. “Roll Your Own Programs” designed by Troop 55 adults in fishing, backpacking, climbing, and other activities that operate independently of any organized Scout program, typically for Scouts who have already attended at least one (or more) Merit Badge Camps, but not eligible for High Adventure Programs.

3. High Adventure Programs – Programs that typically require Scouts to be age 13+, and often First Class rank or above. There is a great variety of High Adventure Programs, and it is essential to pay attention to the minimum requirements for Scouts and adults to participate in them.

- a. **Council-Sponsored 13+ High Adventure** – Programs sponsored by a Boy Scout council for which Scouts must be at least 13 years old to participate. It is very important to pay attention to the particular age requirements. Some programs require Scouts to be age 13 by the time they arrive at camp. Others require them to be 13 by, for example, January 1 of the year in which they attend the summer program.
- b. **BSA or Council-Sponsored 14+ High Adventure** - Programs sponsored by the BSA or a local council for which Scouts must be 14 or have finished the 8th grade to participate. Philmont Scout Ranch offers a backpacking program that is the most famous of these high adventure programs.
- c. **Roll Your Own 14+ High Adventure Programs** – High Adventure Programs sponsored by Troop 55 independent of any BSA Council-sponsored camp. Often these are designed for Scouts who already have experience at one or more High Adventure Programs.

Summer Camp Leadership

1. Scout Duty Roster – implementing the Patrol Method in summer programs

The following are typical roles for Scouts at all summer camp programs.

Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), Asst. Senior Patrol Leader(s) (ASPL), and Patrol/Crew Leaders – The Scouts in charge of the Scouts.

There are important differences in the selection of Scouts to serve as leaders for different kinds of summer camps.

Unless the elected Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) of the Troop is attending a Merit Badge camp, the Scoutmaster ordinarily will appoint a Scout to serve as SPL for that camp, and with his assistance, select ASPL's and Patrol Leaders.

For virtually all High Adventure Camps, the Scouts attending *must elect* their SPL and/or crew leaders, preferably long before they depart for the camp.

Quartermaster – Responsible for the Troop-supplied gear for a camp.

Historian/Scribe – Responsible for assisting adult in preparing promotional materials, accumulating photographs, preparing a report to the Troop after the camp is completed.

Chaplain's Aide – Successful summer camps, especially High Adventure Programs, always have an active and engaged Chaplain's Aide to organize prayers, services, and thorns and roses.

There are many other roles that may need to be filled, depending on the nature of the program, including wilderness first aid, instructors, and the like.

2. Adult Duty Roster

The following are typical roles for adults at summer camp programs.

Scoutmaster – The adult in charge of the Scouts and the adults. If the Troop 55 Scoutmaster will not be in attendance, he or the Troop Committee Chair will appoint an acting Scoutmaster for the particular summer camp.

Campmaster – The adult in charge of logistics and registration, assisted by many others.

Patrol Assistant Scoutmasters – Where there are two or more patrols or crews organized for the summer camp program, at least one PASM per patrol. More may be necessary to maintain two-deep leadership.

Medical Officer – In charge of the medical records for all participants

Merit Badge Registrar/Advisor/Fixer – At merit badge camps, particularly where there are a large number of Troop 55 Scouts attending, it is essential to have an adult in charge of assisting Scouts in getting registered for merit badge classes, following up on the completion of tasks for those merit badges, and working with the camp staff to get an accurate record of completions and partials. This person should **not** be the Scoutmaster or Campmaster at any camp attended by more than 15 Troop 55 Scouts.

Quartermaster – Assisted by Scout Quartermaster(s), tending to the Troop-supplied gear for a camp.

Transportation Coordinator(s) – An adult must be in charge of executing the travel arrangements, which vary a lot depending on the distance and mode of travel.

There are many other roles that may need to be filled, depending on the nature of the program, including wilderness first aid, skills instructors for watercraft activities, and the like.

Key Tasks of the Summer Camp Campmaster

Critical First Steps - ASAP

If Troop 55 has used this summer camp program before, talk to the previous Campmaster, who should have much of the information you need, and get his or her file.

Make sure that adequate reservations have been made not only with the camp, but also each segment of any required transportation, stops along the way to camp, and stops along the way of the return. For example, consider airline reservations, ground transportation from airport to camp, return arrangements, reservations at campgrounds utilized along the way, and tourist attractions such as museums.

Make sure you understand the particular gear needed for all aspects of your planned itinerary and program from departure to return. What will the camp program supply? What will Troop 55 supply? What personal gear will Scouts need?

Understand the program needs for your camp

Merit Badge Camps – Understand how your camp works. How does the camp handle registration for particular merit badge classes? Some use on-line registrations well in advance of camp. Some use paper methods. All wind up having to make last minute adjustments. How are the campsites configured? Do you need multiple campsites for the number of Troop 55 Scouts attending? Make sure the camp has a clear understanding months in advance of the number of Scouts and adults Troop 55 plans to

bring to the camp. Some camps are challenged in handling such a large number of Scouts from a single troop.

High Adventure Programs – Learn all you can about the program’s expectations for the skill level of the Scouts participating. Make sure the camp and the Troop are on the same page about this, so that the program is appropriately challenging for our Scouts.

Roll your own programs -- A roll your own program can be tailored closely to what Troop 55 wants, and can be flexible. The challenge is that Troop 55 Scouts and adults are responsible for everything. Make sure that your plan complies with the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

Support Scouts assigned to leadership roles for the campout.

Consulting with the Scoutmaster, the summer camp Campmaster should get a clear explanation of what these Scouts are expected to do, then delegate as much responsibility as they can handle, including program, making announcements, and managing gear and travel arrangements, plus all of the activities at the summer camp.

The key tasks of a Campmaster’s job fall into 5 Phases:

1. Early Preparation Tasks
2. Preparing for the Troop 55 Summer Camp Meeting of Scouts and Adults, and for Sign-Ups
3. Completing Sign-Ups and Preparing for Departure to Camp
4. Departure for Camp, Activities at Camp, and Return
5. Post-Camp Reporting

Campmaster Planning Checklists

Use these checklists to collect information you will want to plan the summer camp, delegate tasks to your team, and execute a summer camp.

Phase 1 – Early Preparation Tasks				
#	Target Date	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
1.1	ASAP	Obtain info re Troop’s previous visit to camp	Campmaster for previous visit	Look in Dropbox “Troop 55 Campmaster”. Consult Troop Committee Chair for password.
1.2	ASAP	Read the <i>Troop 55 Handbook</i> about policies related to summer camp and participation		
1.3	ASAP	Obtain copy of camp’s <i>Leader Guide</i> and read carefully		Completeness and accuracy of these vary a lot among camps. Some camps don’t publish updated Guide until well after Troop 55 planning begins. Previous year’s guide may be useful.
1.4	ASAP, but by January 15 at the latest for a summer camp	Confirm camp reservation made and fees paid		Camp fees are often paid according to a schedule in installments.
1.5	ASAP	Confirm camp arrival/departure dates and times	Camp staff	Usually published in the camp literature, but sometimes adjusted to meet Troop 55 needs.
1.6	ASAP	Get intelligence on the camp		Don’t rely exclusively on the published camp literature. Talk to adults other troops who have attended recently, if Troop 55 has not.

Phase 1 – Early Preparation Tasks				
#	Target Date	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
1.7	ASAP	Confirm hired transportation (e.g. bus or plane) reservation made	Troop Transportation Coordinator	Key questions: When must airline commitment be made? When must final names of participants be submitted to airline?
1.8	ASAP and at least 5 weeks prior to departure	Confirm Activities planned to take place on the way to or after departure from camp		Sometimes Troop 55 organizes a museum visit, a raft trip, or other activities not part of the Council-sponsored camp program.
1.9	ASAP	Understand the food at the camp. All meals provided in dining hall? Cooking permitted or required in campsite?		
1.10	ASAP	Understand the equipment the camp expects Troop to supply. Tents? Cooking gear?		
1.11	ASAP	Understand the logistics of gear. Is Troop 55 taking the Troop's trailer to the camp? Can you get all the gear on the bus or the plane? Do you need to ship it ahead of camp?		

Phase 1 – Early Preparation Tasks				
#	Target Date	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
1.12	ASAP	Begin developing a budget and estimate total fees for participants		Consider camp-required fees, transportation, food costs (including during transport), special equipment needs, extra activities before, during, or after camp, special shirts. The Troop attempts to set fees designed to fully cover the cost and provide a modest margin of revenue over expenses. Get the budget used for any similar camp previously.

Phase 2 – Preparing for the Troop 55 Summer Camp Meeting of Scouts and Adults, and for Sign-Ups

The Troop typically holds a Summer Camp Information Session for Scouts and adults in late winter at which presentations are made regarding each summer camp program. Except for programs that require earlier signup commitments, this meeting usually is the “kick-off” for the start of summer camp registrations.

As discussed in the *Troop 55 Handbook*, each summer camp program opportunity selected by the Troop must be open to all Troop 55 Scouts who meet the rank, age, training, and experience requirements for that program established by the Troop 55 Scoutmaster and the camp sponsor. Where enrollment is limited (and it almost always is) the available spots for Scouts go to those first registered and paid. See the *Troop 55 Handbook* section on “Summer Camps” for more information about the eligibility of Scouts and adults to attend.

Some summer camp programs, particularly High Adventure Programs, may have an inflexible upper limit in the number of Scouts and adults that the Troop can register. With these programs, it is particularly important to identify the “start date” for Troop 55 Scouts to register.

#	Before the Summer Camp Info Session	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
2.1	ASAP	Send brief description of campout for Troop News/social media for dissemination	Troop News Publisher - Social Media coordinator	This should be 3 or 4 sentences at most. It is important for Troop Scouts and adults to hear about the camp in summary form <i>well before</i> the Summer Camp Meeting
2.2	ASAP	Understand the merit badge class and optional program registration process at the camp, including prerequisites, fees, and deadlines	Consult camp literature	Every camp is different. Some merit badge classes and popular optional programs fill up quickly. Be ready to communicate deadlines.

#	Before the Summer Camp Info Session	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
2.3	At least one month before	Refine budget and identify good estimate of participant fees	SM, TCC, and Troop Treasurer	Troop strives to sponsor programs affordable to all Scouts. Good practice for fees to be reviewed by the Troop Committee in advance of Summer Camp Meeting.
2.4	At least 2 weeks before	Send a brief description of campout, costs, location to Doubleknot	Doubleknot Coordinator	Confirm specific information requirement from Doubleknot coordinator. Run test registrations on Doubleknot before system is opened up.
2.5	2 weeks before	Prepare promotional material about the camp for use at the meeting	Any T-55 Scouts or adults who previously participated at that camp.	Some camps have excellent websites, video, and printed materials. Others have few such resources. Get an interested Scout to help you "sell" the program at the Summer Camp Meeting if possible.
2.6	2 weeks before	Establish registration and payment deadline	SM and TCC and Summer Camp Coordinator	Needed deadlines vary a lot depending on, for example, airline commitments and camp requirements. Deadlines are typically no later than May 1, and may be much earlier.

Phase 3 – Completing Sign-Ups and Preparing for Departure to Camp	
<p>There is a lot of variation among camps in the tasks after the Summer Camp Information Session and before departure. What they have in common are registration, collection of fees, identification of Scouts in leadership positions, collection of required medical forms, identification of medical needs of participants, communication with the camp, and confirmation of all travel arrangements.</p> <p>The checklist below is not a comprehensive list of all tasks. For example, foreign travel has many requirements not covered below.</p>	

#	Target Date before Departure	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
3.1	ASAP, preferably at Summer Camp Info Session	Schedule date(s) for meeting(s) and shakedowns of all Scouts and adults registered for particular camp.	SM and TCC	Establish date(s) for the meeting(s), and communicate schedule to all participants. High Adventure Programs often need shakedowns, e.g. weekend backpacking or canoeing training trips, which may be at regular Troop 55 campouts, or separately.
3.2	ASAP	Identify adults assisting with merit badge registration, transportation coordination, medical, and quartermaster duties. Identify Scouts appointed by SM or acting SM for leadership roles at merit badge camps.	Every adult registered for camp	Every adult needs an important job.

#	Target Date before Departure	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
3.3	ASAP	Assure that Quartermasters circulate list of required personal clothing and gear for camp program	SM and Quartermasters. Use <i>Troop 55 Handbook</i> and <i>Campmaster Handbook</i> , and Camp Leader's Guide	
3.4	ASAP following closing of registration	Send reminders to all Scouts and adults registered of camp essentials and scheduled meeting(s)	<i>Troop News</i> Publisher -Social Media coordinator, emails/texts to registered Scouts and their parents, and adults registered	Doubleknot Coordinator provides contact data.
3.5	ASAP following closing of registration	Send Camp's " <i>Leader's Guide</i> " to Scouts registered, their parents, and adults registered		
3.6	ASAP following closing of registration	Merit Badge Camps: Identify Scouts appointed by SM or acting SM for leadership roles.	SM or acting SM for the Camp	SM, acting SM, and Campmaster should give these Scouts as much (or more) responsibility than they can handle.
3.7	ASAP following closing of registration	Mid-Adventure Programs: Identify Scouts appointed by SM or acting SM for leadership roles or elected by Scouts	SM or acting SM for the Camp	Most Mid-Adventure Camps have Scouts appointed to leadership positions by SM or acting SM, but some may be elected by Scouts.

#	Target Date before Departure	Task	Whom to ask	Comments
3.8	At scheduled pre-campout meeting(s), at least several weeks before departure	High Adventure Programs: Identify SPL, Crew Leaders, Quartermasters, Scribe/Historian, and Chaplain Aide elected by Scouts registered for program	SM or acting SM for the Camp and elected SPL for program	
3.9	ASAP following closing of registration	Check with Transportation Coordinators to make sure airline, chartered bus, and rented vehicle requirements are met.	Troop Transportation Coordinator and Camp adult assigned to assist with transportation.	It is especially a good idea to reconfirm arrangements for chartered buses again two weeks before departure.

Phase 4 - Departure for Camp, Activities at Camp, and Return

Below is a list of checklists of general applicability to all summer camps. Not comprehensive.

#	Task	Leaders Responsible	Timing	Comments
4.1	Transportation – prepare list of participants traveling	Transportation Coordinator	At least one week before departure	Don't forget to include all adults traveling. Historically, adults have been harder to keep track of than the Scouts!
4.2	Camp on-site registration	Campmaster, Medical officer, and Merit Badge Coordinator	On arrival at camp	Camps typically require immediate meetings for supply of medical forms, assignment of campsites, etc.
4.3	Post duty rosters and schedules conspicuously	Campmaster or Asst. Campmaster	On arrival at camp	Make sure you have the materials needed to post the rosters and schedules.
4.4	Record the number of nights of outdoor camping for each Scout and adult attending	Campmaster or Asst. Campmaster	Before departure from Camp	
4.5	Make sure Scouts have executed complete clean sweep, and all trash removed from campsite	SM, Campmaster, or Asst. Campmaster	Before departure from Camp	

Phase 5 – Post-Camp Wrap-Up			
#	Task	Person	Comments
5.1	Return health & safety forms		
5.2	Return Board of Review Box to Advancement.		
5.3	Preserve your file for future Campmasters	Campmaster	File in Dropbox “Troop 55 Campmaster”. Consult Troop Committee Chair for password.
5.4	Turn in receipts to Troop Treasurer within 1 week	Treasurer	
5.5	Report nights of outdoor camping for Scouts and adults attending	Nights Camping Recorder	
5.6	Report service hours of Scouts and adults for conservation projects		
5.7	Prepare Summary Report on Campout		Look at previous reports in Dropbox “Troop 55 Campmaster” file. Add your completed report there too. Send copy to Troop Committee Chair and Scoutmaster.
5.8	Attend Troop Committee after the campout to report on results		Generally, 2d Thursday of the month, SJD Room 208, 6 PM

Campout Support Contact Info (rev. Oct. 2018)			
Position	Person	Phone	Email
Board of Review Coordinator	Leslie McCullogh	713.851.5828	Troop55BofR@gmail.com
Campmaster	YOU!		
Campout Sign Up/Double Knot	David Pesikoff	713.557.1882	pesikoff@yahoo.com
Canoe Coordinator	Janice Walden	281.923.9600	janice@vandykewalden.com
Chaplain Aide advisor	Eric Wade	832.722.8438	EWade@porterhedges.com
Climbing Coordinator	R.J. Woodward	713.204.7980	rjw.bsa@comcast.net
Medical Coordinator (adult)	Chip Lane & Sara Lane	832.236.8688	chip.lane@lanelaw.com sarah.lane75@hotmail.com
Nights Camped Recorder	James Cauble	713.664.7860	james@cauble.org
Outdoor Program Chair	Mike Cavender	903.520.6755	mike@cavenders.com
Quartermaster (adult)	Jerrit Coward	713.775.5616	jerrit.coward@gmail.com
Scoutmaster	Bob Casey	713.828.9292	scoutmaster@troop55.org
Senior Patrol Leader	Consult Troop 55 website		
SJD Room Scheduler	Michelle Wrubel	917.826.3848	mfwrubel@fibex.us
Social Media	Vernon Jones		vtjj@vernonjones.com
Summer Camp Coordinators	Chad Disch Karl Poirot Tara Varcados	713.894.7216 281.204.7602 713.447.5007	cdisch831@gmail.com varcados@yahoo.com kpoirot@chevron.com
Training Coordinator	Steve Mach	713.775.5616	training@troop55.org
Transportation Coordinator	Lauren Marangell	713.419.4299	lmarangell@gmail.com
Treasurer	Richard Butler	713.775.5616	treasurer@troop55.org
Troop Committee Chair	Larry Lawyer	832.498.5206	tcc@troop55.org
<i>Troop News</i> Editor	Tammy Casey	832.330.7070	troop55newsletter@gmail.com
Troop Secretary	Suanne Bouvier	415.407.4326	troop55volunteers@gmail.com
Volunteer coordinator	Suanne Bouvier	415.407.4326	Troop55volunteers@gmail.com